

Lake Powell Update Saturday August 15, 2015

EPA Sampling Activity:

Today EPA and START conducted sampling of the San Juan Arm of Lake Powell. EPA was greatly assisted by NPS Glen Canyon who provided all logistical support including a 46 and a 26 foot vessel and three personnel.

Surface water, bottom water samples and sediment samples were collected at six locations on the San Juan Arm. This included sample locations at what is believed to be the San Juan River inflow point into Lake Powell between Zahn Bay and Great Bend as well as the "plunge" area just east of Great Bend where river water plunges below the lake water. Both of these were deemed critical locations based on conversations with technical experts from various agencies.

On Sunday the sampling team will collect samples from the main stem of Lake Powell between Dangling Rope and the Glen Canyon Dam.

State of Utah San Juan River Water Quality Analysis and Announcements:

Late last night the State of Utah lifted their advisories for Utah Crop Irrigation and Livestock Watering... See below for more detail:

State of Utah Lifts Advisories for Utah Crop Irrigation and Livestock Watering (08/14/15)

SALT LAKE CITY -- The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) is lifting any advisories against using San Juan River water for crop irrigation and livestock watering. Based on the latest Utah Department of Environmental Quality evaluation of the San Juan River water sample data, Utah State University's veterinary toxicologist reports the river's highest levels of contamination posed no adverse affects on plants, soils and animals, only short-term and minimal exposure risks.

River water sampling shows that the majority of the mine contamination passed through San Juan County on Tuesday, August 11. The UDAF advises farmers and ranchers to remain cautious and report any changes in the health of their crops and livestock.

<http://www.deq.utah.gov/Topics/Water/goldkingmine/index.htm>

In another slight change in plans from earlier this afternoon, Utah has decided to continue to work on the explanation of its WQ data tomorrow and then hopefully they will post the graphs and the explanations of the data on Monday.

This from Utah DEQ DWQ:

"We've decided to wait to publish the trend graphics until Monday. We will add today's samples in and add weather events to the graphs as well as background concentrations from our historic dataset and the peak observed value from your NM samples on 8/9. We will be working on a narrative explanation for the graphs tomorrow and Monday."

The Utah DEQ Department of Water Quality has provided its Gold King Release San Juan River Sampling data to us for our own analysis and review, and this data has been forwarded to Harry Allen, Ned Black and Gerry Hiatt.

Urgent Request for Data from the Navajo Nation:

One set of data Utah would like to access is the historic data from Navajo Nation in the San Juan River. With a larger historic dataset they will be able to tease out the storm effects on their most recent sampling data. They have asked Navajo Nation and they've said they are willing to share it but they haven't seen the data yet they believe because Navajo Nation has been busy with other things this week. I've asked Laura Ebbert (Farmington LNO) to assist with this request.

Request for EPA POC to discuss San Juan River Data Collaboration with Utah DWQ Director

The Director of the State of Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Mr. Walt Baker, would like to speak to someone at EPA today regarding the need to collaborate on San Juan River sampling data and related Agency water quality monitoring information.

The State of Utah has been very progressive in their monitoring and sampling activities in response to the Gold King release, and they would

1. appreciate the opportunity to have access to EPA sampling data to build a better picture of the status of the San Juan, and
2. they would like to consider a partnership with EPA on a long-term assessment of the San Juan and perhaps Lake Powell.

An email request has been sent to the Farmington ICP (Bret Moxley) with a cc to others. Please keep the Lake Powell Branch aware of progress in fulfilling this important request.

Outreach to Local Officials:

Today the Lake Powell Branch also provided background information and online links regarding EPA's Gold King response activity to Ms. Lena Fowler, Coconino County Supervisor.

Photos of Lake Powell Sampling Activities

Per a request for photos of this weekend's sampling events, recent photos (Aug 10th) of the Lake Powell Arm of the San Juan River, the area being sampled this weekend, were emailed to our Press Office with the locations as part of the titles.... photo credits are the same for each photo as follows: "NPS Photo"



"Plunge" area within the Lake Powell Arm of the San Juan River just east of Great Bend